



Luttrill & Pearl Payne School of Education

**Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Graduate Study
Luttrill & Pearl Payne School of Education
College of Human Sciences and Education
Louisiana State University**

This handbook is intended for informational use by graduate students in the Luttrill and Pearl Payne School of Education (hereafter Payne SoE). Its purpose is to highlight pertinent information essential for Payne SoE graduate students and is meant to supplement and clarify guidelines for graduate students shared by other LSU resources. This manual is not intended to be a substitute for those documents or for any specific procedures deemed appropriate by the students' graduate Advisor or Chair.

It is the responsibility of the graduate students to familiarize themselves with the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

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Glossary of Terms

Advisor: A faculty advisor will be assigned once a student is admitted by the graduate school. This faculty member, who typically shares some elements of the student's interests or field, has agreed to initially assist in understanding the degree plan and program requirements. A student should meet with their faculty advisor prior to the start of the first semester to plan for the first year in the program.

American Psychological Association (APA) style: This is a style of writing and formatting most Payne SoE faculty require for assignments and individual milestone documents. Students are responsible for understanding APA style. All PhD students are formally introduced to this style in ELRC 7299, where resources are recommended.

Areas of Focus: The Payne SoE has two major areas, Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) and Educational Leadership, Research, & Counseling (ELRC). Within each major area are further degrees, concentrations, and areas of focus:

PhD in Educational Leadership and Research:

- PK-12 Educational Leadership
- Higher Education Administration
- Educational Research

PhD in Curriculum and Instruction: (focus areas in:)

- Curriculum Studies
- Science Education, Reading/Literacy Education, Social Studies Education, Math Education, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Gifted Education, Special Education

MA in Education:

- Higher Education Administration
- Applied Research, Methods, Evaluation (ARME)
- Educational Technology

MEd in Curriculum and Instruction (focus areas in:)

- Science Education, Reading/Literacy Education, Social Studies Education, Math Education, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Gifted Education, Special Education

MEd in Education

- Counselor Education (concentrations in School and Clinical Mental Health Counseling)
- Educational Leadership

EdS in Curriculum and Instruction

- Focus areas: Science Education, Reading/Literacy Education, Social Studies Education, Math Education, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Gifted Education, Special Education

EdS in Educational Leadership, Research, and Counseling

- Educational Leadership

- Counseling
- Master of Teaching (MAT)
- Elementary
 - Secondary

Certificates: The Payne SoE offers several certificates that are considered as separate credentials. Each certificate can often be folded into your existing degree plan. Current Graduate Certificates offered are Instructional Coaching and Educational Technology.

Committee Chair (for PhD students, often referred to as Major Professor): A student's initial program advisor is sometimes different from the faculty member who later serves as Chair of the thesis, dissertation, or culminating project committee. New students are assigned an advisor to help with course planning, program requirements, and early academic guidance. As a student's interests become more defined, they may select a Committee Chair whose expertise better aligns with their research or professional goals. Changing from an initial advisor to a Committee Chair is a normal part of graduate study and reflects the student's developing focus. The PhD Committee Chair, or Major Professor, becomes the doctoral student's primary academic mentor. This faculty member helps guide the student's program of study, supports their research and professional development, and serves as chair of the dissertation committee. The Chair/Major Professor provides feedback on research ideas, ensures academic and methodological standards are met, and helps the student navigate program milestones from coursework through dissertation completion. They also play an important role in mentoring the student's growth as an emerging scholar and professional in the field.

Committee Composition: At the master's and EdS level, the Chair is designated as chair or co-chair of the master's committee. Other committee members (generally two additional faculty members with graduate faculty status from the Payne SoE) may be from the major department or from other pertinent departments. If there is an external minor, one committee member must represent the minor department. At the PhD level, the committee is typically comprised of the Chair, two additional faculty members, and a Dean's Representative who is assigned by the Graduate School. At least two of the three selected committee members must have full graduate faculty status. At least two of the three selected faculty members must have appointments in the School of Education. See the current Graduate Catalog for more details about committee composition and graduate faculty status. Students should work with the Advisor or Chair to determine the composition of the committee.

Dean's Representative: A Dean's Representative is appointed to every doctoral committee. These individuals represent the Vice Provost & Dean of the Graduate School and the entire Graduate Faculty. They are full voting members of the committee with all the rights and responsibilities of the other committee members (see previous on Committee Composition).

Defenses: For certain graduate degree plans, students will participate in scheduled oral

defenses related to their independent research.

Degree Plan: The Degree Plan is a document to plan course work and dissertation credits. Typically, this is completed within the 1st semester but should be mapped out within year 1 of admittance in conjunction with the student's Advisor. Degree plans have required courses or course categories that all students must meet but also include elective courses.

Graduate Administrative Program Specialist (APS). The APS is a support staff member who is dedicated to graduate study and assists faculty in routing paperwork, confirming graduation, and maintaining records. The APS assists graduate students with general procedures and policies, not advising questions.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) - An Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a group registered with the federal government that is formally designated to review and monitor research involving human subjects. The purpose of the reviews is to protect the safety, rights, and welfare of research participants and to ensure institutional compliance with federal and state regulations and University policies. The LSU IRB is managed by the Office of Research Compliance & Integrity, which is within the Office of Research & Economic Development. All research activities conducted by LSU faculty, staff or students that involve human participants must be submitted to the LSU IRB for review. IRB approval must be obtained prior to beginning recruitment activities, data collection, etc. on any human subjects research. Students cannot submit their research proposals to IRB until the committee approves the proposal. Conservatively, expect a 2–3-week turnaround time between submission and approval. Expect recommended changes. [The LSU IRB website includes helpful examples.](#)

iThenticate - iThenticate is a professional plagiarism detection and prevention technology used worldwide by scholarly publishers and research institutions to ensure the originality of written work before publication. All LSU faculty, graduate students and research associates can access iThenticate at the following web address: ithenticate.lsu.edu.

Milestones: Milestones are major accomplishments of a degree. For MA and MEd, the milestones are the Comprehensive Examination or project OR the thesis defense (if pursuing the thesis option for the program) For PhD, the general examination and the oral defense of the written dissertation are required graduate school milestones. The Payne SoE also stipulates a written proposal and oral defense as an expected milestone separate from the General Exam oral defense.

Minor Professor: If completing a minor, this faculty member advises regarding minor requirements. Therefore, students must communicate on a regular basis with the minor professor. This individual must be an additional member of the graduate student's committee.

Modern Language Association (MLA) style: This is a style of writing and formatting a limited number of Payne SoE faculty require. If required, students are responsible for understanding MLA style.

Overview of Graduate Study

The School of Education (SoE) offers several graduate degrees. The Doctor of Philosophy degree, commonly called the PhD, is the highest earned degree offered by Louisiana State University. It is conferred only for work of distinction and only in recognition of marked ability and achievement; the degree is not granted merely in recognition of faithful performance of prescribed coursework. In addition, we offer programs leading to a Master of Arts (MA), a Master of Education (MEd), Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), and an Educational Specialist Certificate (EdS). See our degrees and programs as follows:

PhD in Educational Leadership and Research:

- PK-12 Educational Leadership
- Higher Education Administration
- Educational Research

PhD in Curriculum and Instruction: (focus areas in:)

- Curriculum Studies
- Science Education, Reading/Literacy Education, Social Studies Education, Math Education, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Gifted Education, Special Education

MA in Education:

- Higher Education Administration
- Applied Research, Methods, Evaluation (ARME)
- Educational Technology

MEd in Curriculum and Instruction (focus areas in:)

- Science Education, Reading/Literacy Education, Social Studies Education, Math Education, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Gifted Education, Special Education

MEd in Education

- Counselor Education (concentrations in School and Clinical Mental Health Counseling)
- Educational Leadership

EdS in Curriculum and Instruction

- Focus areas: Science Education, Reading/Literacy Education, Social Studies Education, Math Education, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Gifted Education, Special Education

EdS in Educational Leadership, Research, and Counseling

- Educational Leadership
- Counseling

Master of Teaching (MAT)

- Elementary
- Secondary

Graduate Certificates: Instructional Coaching; Educational Technology

Graduate School

All graduate study at LSU is governed by the Pinkie Gordon Lane Graduate School, including all published policies, regulations, deadlines, and requirements. Specific Payne SoE policies are contained within this document. All graduate students are responsible for progress toward their degrees by following the rules and policies of the Payne SoE and the LSU Graduate School.

ADMISSION

To apply to graduate programs in the Payne SoE, the applicant must complete the LSU [Graduate School application](#) for admission electronically. The Graduate School application is also linked on the SoE website: [SoE Application](#). This application includes submission of:

- Official transcript(s) must be sent directly from the Office of the Registrar of each college or university attended to the Graduate School via procedures detailed on the application,
- Two-three professional letters of recommendation attesting to the applicant's potential for successful graduate study written by any combination of colleagues, professors, or supervisors familiar with applicant's academic and professional capacity,
- A statement of purpose, included on the Graduate School application form, (2-3 single-spaced pages) that describes interest in our program, experience that would contribute to success in our program, research interests (if known), and professional goals. Please also indicate an advisor (if known),
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores sent directly from Educational Testing Service (ETS) to the Graduate School are required for admission to all PhD programs. Note: The GRE is test-optional for all master's and EdS programs except for Counselor Education and the M.A. in Research (ARME).
- A writing sample (e.g., previous publication; course papers, OPTIONAL),
- For individuals whose native language is not English, command of English as demonstrated by successful completion of the IELTS, TOEFL, PTE, Duolingo English, or Michigan English Test (4 part skill test)(A score of 550 (paper-based), 213 (computer- based) or 79 (Internet-based) on the TOEFL or a score of 6.5 on the IELTS, a score of 59 on the PTE, a score of 110 on Duolingo English, or a score of 53 (B2) on the Michigan English test).(See Graduate School website for more details).

Admission Decisions

Unconditional admission. Successful applicants generally possess an undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0. However, each application is considered holistically and weaknesses in one area may be tempered by strengths in another.

Probationary admission. Applicants whose credentials do not meet admission criteria may be considered for probationary admission. A student admitted under these

conditions will be removed from probation after successfully completing nine semester hours of graduate work (with at least a 3.0 GPA).

Denial. Students who fail to meet the entrance criteria are not admitted for graduate study.

Time limits for completion of Degree: Please note Graduate School time limits: MA, MED, and EdS students have a 5-year window in which to complete all degree requirements and apply for graduation. Doctoral degree programs must be completed within 7 years from the time a student is classified as a doctoral student and admitted to program. There is no circumstance under which that “clock” may be stopped. A student may apply for a one-year extension of the seven-year time limit due to extenuating circumstances, with the approval of all members of the committee.

Credit for Previous Graduate Work

The student’s advisor has discretion to allow course requirements for the degree to be fulfilled through evidence of previous graduate work:

MA and MEd: Up to 12 hours of graduate credit from a comparable, accredited institution may be transferred and counted toward a Master’s program at LSU in the Payne SoE with the consent of the Advisor. These credits must not have counted toward an earned Master’s degree. These approved transfer courses can be transferred into the graduate program only after the student has earned nine credit hours with an overall GPA of at least 3.0 in the current SoE graduate program. All transfer work must have been completed within 5 years of the time the student is eligible to transfer the credit, and the student must have earned a grade of “B” or better for the graduate credits to be eligible for transfer into a degree program.

Non-matriculating Graduate Study. Non-matriculating students may enroll in courses numbered 6000 and above for a total of up to six semester hours. If the student is later admitted to a SoE graduate program, these courses may be transferred to a SOE graduate program with the consent of the Advisor or Chair. An unlimited number of courses numbered 5999 and below may be taken as a non-matriculating student, but only those courses with the consent of the Advisor may be eligible for transfer to a SOE graduate program. In total, a maximum of 12 hours of credits taken as a non-matriculating student may be transferred into a graduate program. Approved coursework taken as a non-matriculating student can be transferred only after the student has completed at least nine credit hours with an overall GPA of at least a “B” or better in the current SoE graduate program. All transfer work must have been completed within 5 years of the time the student is eligible to transfer the credit, and the student must have earned a grade of “B” or better for the graduate credits to be eligible for transfer into a degree program. Please see [Transfer of Credit form](#) for more information.

EdS: At least one-third of the required credits toward the EdS must be earned through course credit earned at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

Graduate Certificates: All coursework for graduate certificates must be taken through LSU-Baton Rouge campus. Any previous coursework applied to the certificate program must not be older than five years by the time the student completes the certificate.

PhD The student's Chair has discretion to allow course requirements for the degree to be fulfilled through evidence of previous graduate work. Transferred coursework, dissertation hours excepted, may be included in the departmental-level academic course plan if accepted by the department and the student's advisory committee. At least one-half of the minimum required credit in the doctoral program (90 hours, including transfer credit) must be courses at or above the 7000-level, and at least one-half of the total must be earned at LSU (dissertation hours excepted).

Getting Started: Advising, Degree Plan, & Committee

MA/MEd/EdS students

Before beginning a Master's or EdS program, each student meets with their assigned Advisor to plan a course schedule for at least the first two semesters. During this meeting, the student and Advisor will also review program requirements and discuss a timeline for forming a graduate committee. These decisions are documented on the Program of Study form. One copy should be kept by the Advisor and one by the student. As the student progresses through the program, any changes to the Program of Study must be discussed with and approved by the Advisor. See our **School of Education Program of Study Guides** to view a worksheet tailored to your graduate program.

No later than three weeks before the comprehensive examination or final project, the student works with the Advisor to finalize the Committee Chair and committee members. This committee will evaluate and vote on the results of the comprehensive exam or project.

PhD students

Before beginning their doctoral program, the student contacts and/or meets with their Advisor to determine a course schedule for the first and second semesters of study. The two required courses for Year 1 in the PhD program should be taken as follows: Fall ELRC 7299 – Introduction to Scholarship and Spring EDCI 7190 Traditions of Inquiry. During their initial meetings, the Advisor and student will develop a Program of Study, outlining the coursework designated as necessary for completing the doctoral degree. Note that $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total credits for the PhD must be earned at 7000-level or higher. Minor coursework is also included on the SoE Program of Study. Changes to the Program of Study may be made with the consent of the chair. The Program of Study may be completed using the forms included in our School of Education Program of Study Guides resource.

Establishment of Dissertation Committee

At the PhD level, the committee is comprised of a Chair, two additional faculty members, and a Dean's Representative. At least two out of the three selected committee members must hold full [graduate faculty status](#). Two out of three **members** must serve as faculty members in the SoE. The Dean's Representative is assigned by the Graduate School. The Graduate School will assign a Dean's Representative to the committee prior to your General Defense oral defense. See Graduate School catalog for specific policies around committee composition and graduate faculty status.

Continuous registration requirement. Doctoral candidates must maintain continuous registration for a minimum of three semester hours of credit each regular semester (fall and spring; excluding summers) from the completion of the General Examination to the end of the semester in which an approved dissertation is submitted to the Graduate School. Students who are doing doctoral research and/or dissertation writing or defend in a summer term must also register for the appropriate number of hours in the summer.

Doctoral Minors. The student may choose to focus some portion of study in a minor content area. This is concentrated study in another content area that is housed in another department at LSU. If the student chooses to have a minor area, one of the committee members must be from the minor department. The minor requirements are determined by the minor department coursework; see that department's documents for specific rules and guidelines.

Examination Procedures

Procedures for Master's Exams:

If the program requires a comprehensive exam and oral defense, all Master's students should submit responses to all committee members 2 weeks before the scheduled oral defense date. Some programs (such as Counselor Education and Higher Education Administration) do not require an oral defense of the comprehensive final examination. Students should consult with their advisor about the details of the final exam or project.

Written Exam Formats: For programs with a comprehensive examination and oral defense, the examination is coordinated by the Committee Chair incorporating questions provided by some or all of the committee members. Exams tend to be program specific. The Chair will contact each member of the graduate committee suggesting a structure for the exam including areas of coverage for committee members and requesting their preference for the format for questions. Standard formats include take-home questions and sit-down questions or some combination of the two:

- Take-home questions will be given to students with a certain time restriction determined by the program to turn in their responses (typically ranging from 3-15 weeks).
- If the examination is sit-down, the student is asked to complete the questions on one or two consecutive days in a location to be determined by the APS. Students whose committee members choose sit-down format questions will specify the conditions of the exam to the student including more general or more specific

guidance as to the content of the questions, and whether this part of the exam will be closed-book or notes or open-book or notes. The SoE provides a set date and time each semester (fall, spring, and summer) for proctoring comprehensive examinations for Master's students.

Oral Defense

For master's programs that require an oral defense of the final exam or thesis, the exam committee will ask questions based on the student's written responses as well as broader topics related to the major area of study. Faculty may ask students to clarify or expand on ideas from their written exams, make connections across topic areas, apply theory to practice or research, or respond to hypothetical scenarios. The goal is to assess their ability to think analytically, synthesize knowledge, and communicate ideas clearly in a professional discussion. At the conclusion of the exam, the student will be asked to step out while the committee deliberates. The committee will then inform the student of the outcome and any next steps, which may include passing, conditional pass with revisions or additional work, or a retake.

Committee Deliberation: Committee members will be given the completed exam responses by either the chair or by the APS. Each committee member is responsible for reading and evaluating the entire exam response and making an independent determination as to whether the candidate's work warrants pass or fail. These votes will be considered by the Committee Chair.

- If all members of the committee vote "pass," the candidate passes.
- If two or more committee members vote "fail," the candidate fails.
- If only one member votes "fail," the candidate passes.
- A student failing the exam may choose to take the general comprehensive examination one additional time only.
- This evaluation applies to oral examinations as well as written examinations.

The committee may decide to "pass" the student pending corrections to be submitted to the committee chair and/or additional committee members, "fail" with a provision that the student may retake the examination or deficient parts of the examination at a specified later date, or "fail" without the possibility of reexamination at a later date. The reexamination option is available to the committee a maximum of one time.

If a committee member is unsure of whether the exam warrants a pass or failure, she or he should not sign the Graduate School exam form until after contacting the committee chair who shall initiate a conversation with the whole committee (face-to-face, by phone, by ZOOM, or by e-mail) to discuss the quality of the work, and the standards of adequacy.

Upon a successful written and/or oral defense, the chair initiates paperwork through the APS and committee members receive paperwork via Docu Sign. The APS forwards results to the Graduate School.

EdS: See your advisor for final exam or project requirements.

Procedures for PhD General Examination

As PhD students approach the end of designated coursework, they prepare for a general comprehensive examination which includes questions in their area of specialization, research, and minor area, if applicable. This exam has two components: 1) written and 2) oral. The *Doctoral Degree Audit and Request for General Examination Form* must be submitted to the Graduate School at least 3 weeks prior to the scheduled oral examination. The request must state the time and the place proposed for the oral examination and the names and signatures of the faculty members selected to serve as the examining committee. In addition, this form contains the official degree audit for the student's program of study for the PhD. When the request for the General Examination is submitted, the Graduate School will assign a Dean's Representative to the committee who will then serve as a permanent member of the committee.

Written Exam Formats: The examination is coordinated by the Chair incorporating questions provided by some or all of the committee members. Some Chairs negotiate questions with the student, and the exam mirrors a mini-proposal format. Exams tend to be program specific. The Chair will contact each member of the graduate committee (except for the Dean of the Graduate School's representative, if applicable) suggesting a structure for the exam including areas of coverage for committee members and requesting their preference for the format for questions. Standard formats include take-home questions and sit-down questions or some combination of the two:

- Take-home questions will be given to students within a certain period of time (generally between 3 and no more than 15 weeks) as determined by the program/Chair to turn in their responses.
- If the examination is sit-down, the student is asked to complete the questions on one or two consecutive days in a location to be determined by the APS. Students whose committee members choose sit-down format questions will specify the conditions of the exam to the student including more general or more specific guidance as to the content of the questions, and whether this part of the exam will be closed-book or notes or open-book or notes.

PhD students schedule their general examinations on an individual basis with the committee members.

Committee Review: Committee members will be given the completed exam responses by either the Committee Chair or by the student. Each committee member is responsible for reading and evaluating the entire exam response.

Oral Defense: The oral exam will take place at the scheduled date and time and the meeting is led by the Chair of the committee. The oral defense of General Exams is an opportunity for students to demonstrate depth of knowledge in their field, the ability to think critically, and readiness to move into advanced doctoral research.

During the defense, the exam committee will ask questions based on the student's written responses as well as broader topics related to the major area of study. Faculty may ask students to clarify or expand on ideas from their written exams, make connections across topic areas, apply theory to practice or research, or respond to hypothetical scenarios. At the conclusion of the oral exam, the student will be asked to step out while the committee deliberates. The committee will then inform the student of the outcome and any next steps, which may include passing, conditional pass with revisions or a retake.

Following the oral defense, the committee will deliberate and vote.

Exam Result Options:

- If all members of the committee vote "pass," the candidate passes.
- If two or more committee members vote "fail," the candidate fails.
- If only one member votes "fail," the candidate passes.
- A student failing the exam may choose to take the general comprehensive examination one additional time only.

Note: The committee may decide to "pass" the student pending corrections to be submitted to the committee chair and/or additional committee members, "fail" with a provision that the student may retake the examination or deficient parts of the examination at a specified later date, or "fail" without the possibility of reexamination at a later date. The reexamination option is available to the committee a maximum of one time.

If a committee member is unsure of whether the exam warrants a pass or failure, she or he should not sign the Graduate School exam form until after contacting the committee chair who shall initiate a conversation with the whole committee (face-to-face, by phone, by ZOOM, or by e-mail) to discuss the quality of the work, and the standards of adequacy.

Upon a successful oral defense, the chair initiates paperwork through the APS and committee members receive paperwork via Docu Sign. The APS forwards results to the Graduate School.

PhD Students: Dissertation Proposal

Proposal Preparation. Traditionally, the proposal is composed of the first three chapters of the dissertation and includes (1) the Introduction, (2) the Literature Review, and (3) the proposed Methods for the dissertation study. The dissertation proposal should be sufficiently detailed and clear to serve as a blueprint for the student's research. The proposal often contains the following elements but may vary depending on the nature of the study and the preferences of the student, Chair, and individual program areas.

- Introduction

- Statement of the problem
- Purpose of the study or rationale
- Significance of the study
- Research questions
- Definition of terms
- Literature Review
- Methods
 - Research study design
 - Research context or setting
 - Participants or subjects (including recruitment strategies and sampling)
 - Proposed data collection procedures
 - Proposed data analysis procedures

The student should work closely with their Chair to draft the proposal. The proposal should be approved by the Chair before the student sends it to the rest of the committee. The Chair assumes responsibility for ensuring that the proposal draft is of sufficient quality before it is circulated to the committee.

Dissertation Proposal Meeting. The proposal must be submitted in final form to the student's committee no later than 2 weeks prior to the scheduled Dissertation Proposal Meeting. At that time, the Committee Chair will contact the APS to notify the office of the date/time of the proposal defense so that a Proposal Defense form can be generated. See Appendix for a copy of the Proposal Defense form. The APS will send this document to the Chair and Committee members on the day prior to the proposal defense.

The Committee members will carefully examine the proposal for its potential contribution to knowledge in the field of study. This meeting is not an official milestone designated by the LSU Graduate School, but it is an SoE mandate. The Dean's Representative for the Committee is invited to the meeting but is not obligated to attend. All other members of the Committee must attend this meeting. During this Dissertation Proposal Meeting, the student will share an oral presentation of their dissertation proposal with their Chair and Committee members. Following the oral presentation, the committee will ask questions about the proposal and provide suggestions to refine it.

Approval or disapproval of the proposal and procedures for changes. After the presentation and time for Committee questions and discussion, the Chair and Committee members will vote on whether the student may proceed with their dissertation. The Committee will likely ask the student to make revisions based on the discussion. Typically, the Chair and student work together to make these revisions. The Committee may be consulted if needed. Once the Committee votes to pass a proposed study, the Chair will remind the Committee members to sign and return their Proposal Defense forms to the APS, who will send a copy to the student and keep a copy in the student's file.

The approved proposal constitutes an informal contract between the Committee and the

student with respect to the general focus and methodology of the dissertation study. Students who seek to institute substantive changes to the research plan should reconvene their Committee to ensure continuing Committee support for the amended project

IRB Training and Approval

A dissertation project involving human subjects must obtain IRB approval before data collection begins. It is recommended to submit an IRB application once the dissertation proposal is approved by the committee. For more information about the IRB application, visit the LSU IRB website at

https://www.lsu.edu/research/compliance/review_boards/irb/. If a student is unsure whether an IRB is required, they can submit an IRB protocol for review, along with their project description/abstract. The LSU IRB will provide feedback to guide them toward approval or determine that IRB oversight is not necessary for their specific project.

All LSU researchers must complete the CITI training before IRB approval. As part of the IRB supporting materials, researchers should provide a valid human subjects research training certificate. LSU IRB accepts the Basic/Refresher CITI training for either Biomedical Research Investigators or Social & Behavioral Research Investigators. For more information, visit the CITI Training instructions website at

https://www.lsu.edu/research/compliance/training/citi_irb_training.php

FINAL DISSERTATIONS

The doctoral dissertation is required of all PhD candidates. Once a final version of the proposal has been approved, the student will collect and analyze the data for the study, as needed, and write the dissertation working closely with the Chair. Members of the student's committee may act as consultants in the research and writing process. The Chair assumes responsibility for ensuring that the dissertation draft is of sufficient quality and approaching final form before it is circulated to the committee and the oral defense is scheduled. Once the Chair approves the dissertation draft, the student should work with their committee members to schedule the oral defense, keeping in mind the Graduate School deadlines related to the following: Application for Degree, Request for Final Defense, Dissertation Upload, and Final Dissertation Upload.

Elements of a Dissertation. The dissertation may have different formats, such as a traditional five-chapter format as described below and a multi-paper format. Typically, the dissertation includes five chapters: (1) Introduction, (2) Literature Review, (3) Methods, (4) Results/Findings, and (5) Discussion and Implications. The typical structure is as follows:

- Front Matter
 - Abstract
 - Table of Contents
 - List of Illustrations
- Chapter 1: Introduction
 - Statement of the problem

- Purpose of the study or rationale
- Significance of the study
- Research questions
- Definition of terms
- Chapter 2: Literature Review
- Chapter 3: Methods
 - Methodology
 - Research context or Setting
 - Participants or subjects
 - Data collection procedures
 - Data analysis procedures
- Chapter 4: Results/Findings
- Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications
- References
- Appendices
- LSU IRB Approval sheet
- LSU vita

Request for Doctoral Final Oral Examination

The student, Chair, and Committee Members mutually agree on the date, time, and location (face-to-face or via ZOOM). The responsibility for arranging, troubleshooting connectivity, and assuring operative connection and time-zone arrangements rests upon the student and the Chair. Committee members must receive the dissertation draft at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled oral defense date. The student is solely responsible for disseminating the dissertation to the entire committee. Students whose work appears, to the Chair or Committee Members, as unlikely to pass the Final Oral Examination should be strongly encouraged to delay the oral defense until revisions are completed and the dissertation is more likely to pass.

The Request for Final Doctoral Defense form must be completed and submitted to the Graduate School at least 3 weeks prior to the defense date or by the current semester deadline for graduation. The APS will submit it to the Graduate School through the SoE Director or Director of Graduate Studies at least 3 weeks prior to the proposed final examination date.

Right before the oral defense, the student should submit the dissertation draft to [iThenticate](#) and report the results to the chair.

Oral Defense Procedures

The oral defense is a public meeting wherein the student orally presents their dissertation to a general audience. At the beginning of the meeting, the chair will excuse visitors and the student and ask whether the Committee has any objections to proceeding with the defense. If the Committee does not have objections, the student may deliver a presentation. At the end of the presentation, the student should be prepared to answer questions from the Committee pertaining to the literature review,

rationale, method, results, discussion, and implications. Following questioning by the committee, the chair may permit a few questions from the audience. When it is time for the Committee to deliberate regarding the results of the examination, any non-Committee audience members will be asked to leave the room.

Evaluation. Following the Final Defense, in confidential consultation among the Doctoral Committee members, the Committee votes on the successful completion of the examination. The Committee may vote “pass,” “fail,” or “retake.” Abstentions are not permitted as per Graduate School regulations. More than one negative vote constitutes failure. At the discretion of the Committee, students who fail may be given one reexamination.

The success of revisions may be determined by the Chair alone or with additional Committee Member input, depending on the consensus of the Committee. The student is responsible for making all corrections presented through the defense process and meeting the upload deadline established each semester by the Graduate School. Waivers and extensions are not granted.

Upon a successful oral defense, the Chair initiates paperwork through the APS and Committee Members receive paperwork via DocuSign. The APS forwards results to the Graduate School.

Dissertation Submission

After students successfully passed the Final Defense and completed all revisions, they should submit the dissertation to the LSU Scholarly Repository (formerly Digital Commons). Students should read the Guidelines for Formatting Theses and Dissertations to become familiar with the Graduate School’s specific requirements for formatting and submitting the documents, and if possible, attend a Graduate School formatting workshop. These workshops are usually held every Fall and Spring semester. Visit the Graduate School website at https://lsu.edu/graduateschool/students/theses_and_dissertations.php for more information.



Luttrill & Pearl Payne School of Education

PhD Dissertation Proposal Defense Form

The Doctoral Committee consists of four members – the Committee Chair, two Committee Members, and a Dean’s Representative. While the Dean’s Representative is invited to review the proposal, they are not required to review or attend the Proposal Defense meeting. All other members of the Committee are required to review the proposal and attend the Proposal Defense meeting.

LSU Student ID	
Name	
Program and Area of Focus (e.g., Curriculum & Instruction – Curriculum Studies)	
Proposal Defense Date	
Title of Proposed Study	

Proposed Timeline of Study

Committee Signatures

Signing below indicates approval of the proposed dissertation. If revisions are requested, please check the provided box and send the requested revisions to the student and the Committee Chair.

Name	Signature	Revisions Requested
Major Professor/Committee Chair		
Committee Member		
Committee Member		
Dean’s Representative (optional)		

Committee Comments (can be attached separately)

Steps to Fulfill Master's Degree Requirements and Graduation

Step	What To Do	When	Approved by
1	Meet with departmental graduate advisor to plan course of study for first semester.	Before first semester of registration.	Graduate Advisor
2	Establish an advisory committee.	Following the deadline imposed by your department and approved no later than 3 weeks prior to the request of final oral thesis defense; see The Graduate School Calendar .	Advisory Committee, Department Chair or Grad Advisor and The Graduate School
3	Ensure that you are enrolled in at least one (1) hour of thesis credit during each semester of thesis writing	During thesis writing and defense.	Advisory Committee and Department Chair or Grad Advisor and The Graduate School
4	If thesis is required, ensure that at least the minimum number of thesis credit hours has been met, along with all other degree requirements.	Required before thesis defense.	Advisory Committee and Department Chair or Grad Advisor
5	Check to make sure advisory committee is up-to-date and course work is current (within the five-year time limit) and completed, or a minimum number of hours remaining.	Before submitting request to schedule Final Defense. (See Graduate catalog for information on course time limit).	Advisory Committee, Department Chair or Grad Advisor, and The Graduate School
6	Submit Request for Final Defense and Degree Audit to The Graduate School. Note: It is advisable that you defend early enough in the semester in order to meet the posted semester's submission deadline. Enroll in Thesis hours or non-thesis courses	Must be received by The Graduate School at least 3 weeks before defense date, but no later than the posted deadline for the degree to be awarded for the current semester. (See The Graduate School Calendar for deadlines.)	<i>First</i> approved by Advisory Committee, Department Chair or Grad Advisor <i>before</i> submission to The Graduate School
7	Submit changes to Degree Audit if courses have been added or removed following initial submission.	Before successful completion of final defense.	Advisory Committee, Department Chair or Grad Advisor, and The Graduate School
8	For Degree Candidates: Complete Application for Degree (Fill out diploma survey) Complete Final Defense and Degree Audit (If not already taken)	See The Graduate School Calendar for deadlines.	Graduate Advisor and The Graduate School
9	Successfully complete Final Defense.	See The Graduate School calendar for deadlines.	Report of the Final Defense should be submitted to The Graduate School. (See The Graduate School calendar for deadlines.)
10	Thesis students: After incorporating committee changes, upload approved PDF file to Digital Commons. Ensure department has submitted signed approval page to The Graduate School.	See The Graduate School Calendar for deadlines.	Advisory committee, Department Chair or Grad Advisor, and The Graduate School
11	Arrange for cap and gown.		Barnes & Noble at LSU Bookstore (Customer Service Area)
12	Degree Candidate Check-out done by Academic Officers	After final grades for degree candidates' deadline at 9:00 am. See The Graduate School calendar for deadlines.	Academic Officers

Steps to Fulfill Doctoral Degree Requirements and Graduation

Step	What To Do	When	Approved By
1	Meet with departmental graduate advisor to plan course of study for first semester.	Before first semester of registration.	Graduate Advisor
2	Establish advisory committee.	Following the deadline imposed by your department and approved no later than 3 weeks prior to the General Defense.	Advisory committee and Department Chair or Grad Advisor
3	Complete course work detailed on degree audit. (See General Catalog for coursework policies.)	Before the General Defense.	Advisory committee, Department Chair or Grad Advisor, and The Graduate School
4	Submit Request for General Defense and Degree Audit .	Must be received by The Graduate School 3 weeks prior to the defense date. A dean's representative will be appointed by The Graduate School.	Advisory committee, Department Chair or Grad Advisor, and The Graduate School
5	Submit General Defense results	Report of the General Defense should be submitted to The Graduate School shortly after defense.	The Graduate School
6	Continuous Registration Requirement-maintain a minimum of three semester hours of credit each regular semester (excluding summers)	Following the successful completion of the General Defense. (See General Catalog section on Continuous Registration Requirement).	The Graduate School
7	Check to make sure advisory committee is up-to-date, and course work is either completed or a minimum number of hours remains.	Before submitting request to schedule Final Defense.	The Graduate School
8	Submit Request for Final Defense advisable that you defend early enough in the semester in order to meet the posted semester's submission deadline. Enroll in Dissertation hours (minimum of 3 hours)	Must be received by The Graduate School at least 3 weeks before Final Defense date or by current semester deadline; (see The Graduate School calendar for deadlines).	Advisory committee, Department Chair or Grad Advisor, and The Graduate School
9	For Degree Candidates: Complete Application for Degree (Fill out diploma survey) Complete Request for Final Defense (If not already taken)	See The Graduate School calendar for deadlines.	The Graduate School
10	Successfully complete Final Defense.	Report of the Final Defense should be submitted to The Graduate School. (see The Graduate School calendar for deadlines)	Advisory committee and The Graduate School

11	After incorporating committee changes, Upload approved PDF file to Digital Commons. Ensure department has submitted signed approval sheet and	See The Graduate School calendar for deadlines.	Advisory committee, Department Chair or Grad Advisor, and The Graduate School
12	If a dissertation or parts of it are based on previously written co-authored research, whether published or not, submit the Declaration of Co-authorship to the Graduate School Editor	See The Graduate School calendar for deadlines.	Advisory Committee and the Graduate School Editor
13	Submit certificate of completion for Survey of Earned Doctorates to The Graduate School	See The Graduate School calendar for deadlines.	Graduate School Editor
14	Arrange for cap, gown and hood.	During final semester	Barnes & Noble at LSU Bookstore (Customer Service Area)
15	Degree Candidate Check-out done by the Graduate School Academic Officers	After final grades for degree candidates' deadline at 9:00 am. See The Graduate School calendar for deadlines.	Graduate School Academic Officers